

Postscripts

By JACK POST

Just as predicted, the *Centennial Celebration* opened up with a beautiful day. Saturday morning we were startled with a sudden thunderclap followed by a deluge in Duxbury, and all those hundreds of people who had been working on plans for the celebration simultaneously thought, almost with the lightning, "What if this happens Sunday morning?" But it didn't. Sunday dawned clear and cool, and whether people were in church or under the sky, a lot of them gave thanks for the good day.

Then along about 10:30 or 11, all those people and a few more began to head down to the King Caesar House where pretty soon parked cars had the streets all cluttered and the trolley and the big bus began to get ready to freight 40 or more people each around the route mapped out on the program, down Washington St., around the Old Burying Ground, up Tremont St. past the First Parish Church to the first stop at the Bradford House.

Now the Bradford House has sort of been the young sister to the King Caesar House, nice but hardly the belle of the town, but on Centennial Day, the Bradford House came into her own. First place, she was all spiffed up, the new wallpapers and paints as attractive as could be, the furniture waxed, the silver gleaming; but best of all, the hostesses were bursting with pride in the story they had to tell of a house in one family all these years, built by the first Gershom across the street from his brother Gamaliel's house, a fine house for a young sea captain, maybe not as imposing as Gamaliel's with its brickwork, but still a fine substantial house. Brother Daniel's house, down Harrison St. a stone's throw, had to be bigger to find room for the aunts and cousins that lived with him; but Gershom could feel that his reflected his success as a shipmaster. Of course it could not compare to Jerusha's house out on the point, for Ezra Weston was making more money with his shipbuilding and made it show in his mansion with those French wallpapers and all. But never mind, of the 4 Bradford houses built around 1808 (Jerusha's included), Gershom was content with his. He had planned it in those long hours running before the trade winds, and it would well serve his needs.

So the house seemed on Sunday, and many people alighting from the trolley wondered why they had not appreciated this little gem before. In time they moved on to the Alden House, far older, more intimately connected with our Pilgrim origins,

a house not easily forgotten, especially now that the history of its many generations has become so familiar from the availability of Dorothy Wentworth's *The Alden Family in the Alden House* in our town. Here were 2 houses come alive for those who wished to understand them; and not far down the road the Drew House could join the select company of old houses (this one 1826) returned to life and usefulness.

Of course nothing in Duxbury quite equals the King Caesar House, from the new-old fence lined with old fashioned roses, the smooth green lawns that sweep past the delightful Victorian garden so lovingly maintained by the garden club, or up on the other side to the welcoming green and white tent sheltering the traditional biscuits and crushed berries of a perfect strawberry shortcake from a summer sun that never did become oppressive.

Inside, the house had achieved near perfection, an exquisite small museum, each piece of furniture, each picture perfectly complementing the beautifully proportioned rooms. This had to be a shipowner's house with its ship portraits, its navigational instruments, its logs and sea captain's desk; yet it reflected too a family of taste and education as Jerusha Bradford's was and Ezra Weston's had become. The imported French wallpapers, the pineapple finials and the careful carving of the ballustrades, the delicate fanlight over the front door all attest to more than a local training and understanding.

If each room is a small vignette of the times, the museum wing presents a delightful overall expression of Duxbury, ranging as far back as the prehistoric peoples that we know existed here, through Pilgrim times and the shipbuilding era, touching on the Civil War, bringing us past the landing of the French-Atlantic cable, and up to this last century, celebrated in a delightful series of period photographs of the town. If you are interested in what has happened in Duxbury, here you will find a fascinating overview, enough to lead you back into entrancing episodes of our history, a highly rewarding journey indeed.

So the Centennial year starts off well. All summer long the celebration continues (see your Centennial program for details), including the highly respected King Caesar Mornings, more Sarah Wingate Taylor free lectures, and on July 24 the Clark's Island picnic, as always a special event, but this year distinguished by the voyage to the island of the shallop from the Mayflower. In September, a special seminar reviews the past 100 years, then turns the light of inquiry on the century to come. What have we done? What will we do over the

years to come? Come join us in the excitement of discovery!



Centennial Notes

Did you enjoy the King Caesar House and its museum on Sunday? If by any piece of bad luck you missed it, don't worry, for it will be open all summer, every day except Monday, after 1 pm with delightful hostesses to show you and your guests some of the finest treasures of early Duxbury.

While you are there, you can pick up stimulating books that will enhance your understanding and become ornaments to your bookshelves. First you will find Dorothy Wentworth's *Settlement & Growth of Duxbury* most enlightening, and good reading too. *The Aldens in the Alden House* will give you an insight into one of our most interesting families. You can find your way to little known historic spots with *Roundabout Duxbury. Tall Ships of Duxbury*, by Frederick Potter, will lead you into our shipbuilding story, and Franklin Hoyt's *French Atlantic Cable* will reveal how modern communications landed in Duxbury; and if you want to become acquainted with many of the people who are as interested as you may become, try the brand new *History of the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society* written by James Otis Post. It will give you insight into how people work together when they share a common cause, this one our own town and its history.

Never forget the Bradford House, open each Wednesday afternoon. A house lived in through all its generations by one distinguished family is unusual and most rewarding.

For information on almost anything to do with our town and its history, call Sabina Crosby at the Drew House (another good place to visit) at 934-6106.

Watch the Parade!